

Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant
Update: June 2007

The Oversight Committee for the Mental Health Transformation Initiative approved funding to support Work Group 7's (Workforce Transformation Workgroup (WTW)) recommendation to: Train the mental health workforce and other health and human service personnel. This funding will allow for implementation of the following set of strategies:

Strategy 1: Establish the *Connecticut Mental Health Workforce Collaborative* as a permanent body charged with planning, coordinating, and implementing interventions to strengthen the workforce.

The mission of the *Collaborative* will be to proactively recruit, develop, support, and retain Connecticut's mental health workforce through coordinated planning and action involving public and private organizations in partnership with persons in recovery, youth, and family members.

Specific functions of the *Collaborative* will include: 1) **leveraging** existing resources; 2) **linking** Connecticut's mental health and higher education systems in a coordinated effort to develop a pipeline of culturally diverse and appropriately trained mental health providers; 3) **assessing** routinely the mental health workforce development needs within Connecticut; 4) **planning**, in the form of a biannual strategic plan on mental health workforce development and a report on the status of this workforce; 5) **implementing** interventions to strengthen the workforce; 6) **promoting** cultural diversity and the employment of consumers and family members in the mental health workforce; 7) **disseminating** best practices in workforce development to employers of the mental health workforce; 8) **advising** Connecticut executive, legislative, and judicial branches on workforce issues and policy; and 9) **applying** for other potential sources of funds to support workforce development.

The activities of the *Collaborative* will be organized through three Standing Councils or work groups: (1) the *Council on the Workforce for Children, Youth, and Families* (including family roles in the workforce); (2) the *Council on the Workforce for Adults*; and (3) the *Council on Persons in Recovery in the Mental Health Workforce*. The latter Council focuses on the role of consumers in the mental health workforce. The Councils will provide planning, oversight, and implementation of the additional strategies being proposed by the WTW, which are outlined below.

Council on the Workforce for Children, Youth, and Families

Strategy 2: Build a workforce skilled in providing intensive, home-based services through coordinated curriculum development, faculty development, university-based coursework, experiential learning through internships, and recruitment of graduating students.

This strategy will engage 15 university faculty members in year long fellowships (5 per year over 3 years) to learn these treatment approaches. Subsequently, the faculty will implement courses for students on intensive, home-based services and assist in placing these students in internships where they can gain practical experience. University and mental health systems will coordinate recruitment and job placement efforts to engage these students in the workforce after graduation.

Strategy 3: Strengthen the role of parents in the workforce by providing leadership training.

A training curriculum on leadership skills will be selected, refined, and offered repeatedly throughout the state to the parents of children with emotional/behavioral difficulties. This initiative will (1) facilitate parents' increased participation and influence in their child's treatment team; (2) prepare parents for paid and volunteer Family Advocate roles on behalf of other families and their children; and (3) assist parents in developing skills to shape state policy, thereby moving Connecticut closer to a family-driven system of care.

Strategy 4: Develop a workforce skilled in the provision of wrap-around services through comprehensive training and consultation.

This strategy was developed by work group (#5) and was reported in the April 2007 issue of Recovery Times.

Council on the Workforce for Adults

Strategy 5: Develop the capacity of supervisors to train, manage, and mentor direct care staff with the support of Web-based learning resources.

This strategy transforms the traditional training approach to one that provides substantive training to staff serving people with psychiatric disabilities and to ensure the provision of competent and supportive supervision by reducing offsite, didactic training, and replacing it with a staff development model that is guided by the supervisor and augmented by access to Web-based learning modules. Standards regarding the nature and frequency of supervision would also be developed and implemented. Four agencies would participate in development of this model, which subsequently could be disseminated to other sites. Supervisors would receive ongoing training, mentoring, and consultation. E-learning modules would be purchased or developed and made accessible to supervisors and their direct care staff.

Strategy 6: Increase the ability of health and human service providers to assist persons with mental illness by providing Web-based education and consultation services.

This initiative will provide Web-based training to health and human service personnel who are not part of the specialty behavioral health workforce, covering

information about people diagnosed with a mental illness, treatment options, and practical strategies for collaborating with and supporting these individuals. These agencies will be provided with a contact person from the mental health field who can consult around staff response to complex problems or situations.

Council on Persons in Recovery in the Mental Health Workforce

Dramatically increasing the roles, responsibilities, influence, and authority of persons in recovery from diverse cultural backgrounds is the strategic direction most likely to produce substantive transformation within Connecticut's system of services, greatly increasing the probability that consumer and family-driven care will be provided. The *Council on Persons in Recovery in the Mental Health Workforce* will: coordinate planning and action on this agenda; develop a "shared vision" regarding the role of persons in recovery in the workforce; identify pathways to and through the workforce; showcase "success stories" that highlight this vision in action; and identify and support "champions" of employment of persons in recovery within the state. No active vehicle to address these functions currently exists within the state. The Council will oversee implementation of specific strategies, as outlined below.

Strategy 7: Create the *Connecticut Recovery Employment Consultation Service (C-RECS)* run by persons in recovery to promote recruitment, training, and retention of persons in recovery from diverse cultural backgrounds in the mental health workforce and enhance the capacity of organizations to engage and support them.

The Connecticut Recovery Employment Consultation Service will be established through contract to a private, non-profit, organization run by persons in recovery. It will manage a recruitment and placement service that includes an on-line job bank, and will provide training and support to persons in recovery to facilitate and sustain their role in the workforce. C-RECS will also provide consultation and technical assistance to mental health provider agencies to increase overall organizational receptivity and capacity to integrate persons in recovery into their workforce.

Strategy 8: Each state agency, through its own resources, should incorporate their educational materials into a Web-based learning management system.

The Department of Information Technology is currently in the process of contracting for access to an LMS that would be available to all state agencies. Each Connecticut state agency has a breadth of training materials that should be made more accessible through incorporation into a Web-based learning management system (LMS). It is recommended that each agency allocate resources to migrate its training materials to an LMS.